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or penning words of fire for the press, or speaking to churches filled with souls whose thoughts fly, while he speaks, far away to sterner scenes. Wherever he be, even if in his quiet study, he cannot be blind or deaf to the surging life of his countrymen. Quiet must come at last, and with it new toils, and those of thought, for the sword cannot forever be the arbiter of our destinies, — if it cuts Gordian knots, yet new complications must appear not thus to be solved. What is there of worth in ancient life, literature, or history? O scholar! who readeest it with thine ears open to questions asked by every thoughtful American, bring it to the light that all may see. We want the old lives that have been lived; the true words that have been spoken; the warnings of tried ways. These are the legacy of antiquity, and to thee, O scholar! belongs the trust.

ART. IV. — *Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds.* By CHARLES MACKAY, LL. D. London: G. Routledge & Co. 1856.

PORSON, a close observer of men as well as a sound Greek critic, once jestingly remarked, that he would some time write the history of human folly in five hundred volumes. Our author has given us but two volumes on this prolific subject, commencing with the “Mississippi Scheme” of John Law, which turned the head of all France, and ending with a chapter on the insane admirers of relics, — “men who have made fools of themselves for the jaw-bone of a saint, the toe-nail of an apostle, the handkerchief a king blew his nose in, or the rope that hanged a criminal.” We shall not follow Mr. Mackay in his interesting discussion of the extraordinary delusions of the race in earlier times; but we propose rather to speak of the popular fallacies which, notwithstanding our vaunted progress, still bewilder the mind and conscience of the people. Out of the many which readily occur, we shall touch upon five; selecting them not because they are the most

striking which could be introduced to notice, but because they are severally connected with the five grand departments of our general education, and correspond to the intellectual, industrial, civil, social, and religious elemental forces in our national life.

The first popular fallacy to which we shall advert relates to the intellectual element in our national education. It is *the confounding of profound learning with practical uselessness*.

Physical activity, in this country, is considered by the many the chief end of man. The study-lamp of the student, in the general apprehension, shines upon an idle dreamer, a drone in the great hive.

As a question preliminary to a fair discussion of this topic, it is important to ask, Who are laborers in this world? Certainly not those only who till the soil, or make music with saws and hammers, or toil in subterranean mines, or do business upon the great deep; but all who contribute, in any way, to the physical, intellectual, moral, or political well-being of their race. If we do not greatly mistake, it will be found, even on a slight examination, that there is no interest of society, however material, which is not intimately and inseparably connected with the researches of the scholar. Behind and beneath the activities of the outward world, the motive power lies out of sight, and is therefore unappreciated. The furnace-fires, which work the piston, and keep the wheels revolving, and vitalize the whole vessel, are down in the darkness of the hold. What is it but the thought of dreamy scholars which now guides the rich freights of the merchant over pathless seas, drives the mysterious shuttles of the manufacturer, reveals to the farmer the hidden resources of his wasted acres, points the miner to the metallic treasures of the sunless earth, and flashes instant intelligence, whether pertaining to business or pleasure, across a continent? Look at the steam-engine, with its Titanic sinews, its Briarean arms, "breathing softly as a sleeping child," and yet endued with a force as mighty as the swelling of the sea. It is but the outward garb of thought. Villages, Thebes-like, spring up at the sound of its Amphion music, and around it gather troops of laughing girls, each of whom

is "a living story of love, and hope, and courage," more beautiful than any which Scott or Dickens has ever told.

"It would not be difficult," says one of the profoundest philosophers that England ever produced, — "it would not be difficult, by an unbroken chain of historic facts, to demonstrate that the most important changes in the commercial relations of the world commenced in the closets or lonely walks of uninterested theorists; that the most important of those discoveries and improvements in the mechanic arts, which have numerically increased our population beyond what the wisest men of a preceding age deemed possible, had their origin, not in the cabinets of statesmen or in the practical insight of men of business, but in the visions of recluse genius." A less close observer than Coleridge could hardly fail to see that the mere inventions of Watt, Whitney, and Morse have not only changed the world in its outward seeming, but have modified the intellectual and social condition of entire races. In truth, there is not an implement of husbandry, not a tool of the artisan, not a piece of machinery, not a human habitation, which has not felt the transforming touch of genius.

It is the glory of this nineteenth century, and especially of this country, that every department of human industry is luminous with thought, — thought which becomes at once the property of the Present and the heritage of the Future. It is not engraved in mystical hieroglyphics upon stone, but it is multiplied by the press, and scattered like winged seed on every wind. It is caught up by school-boy and proletaire, and discussed in reference to its *use* with an earnestness which would have shocked and disgusted the refined idlers of the Porch and the Academy. Time was when greatness among men was determined by the pound, just as we settle the weight and value of beef and pork. The strongest man was the king among his fellows. Red brawn was the badge of royalty. The suitors of Penelope despised and insulted her long-lost husband when he first, as a disguised mendicant, ventured in among them in their revels; they trembled and grew weak in their knees when they found he could bend the bow of Ulysses. But the reverence and terror which brute

force once inspired have become a matter of history. Samson would make poor headway with his jaw-bone against the smallest Zouave with a Minié rifle on his shoulder. The great Pyramid of Cheops, which required in its erection a hundred thousand workmen, relieved every three months, for twenty years, could now be built in half the time by a dozen Manchester engines, managed by a hundred skilful engineers. It is getting to be understood that he succeeds best in his undertaking, whatever it be, who brings to it, not the greatest physical power, but the keenest intellect. The strength which could toss the mountain crag far out into the sea was of little use to Polyphemus after the wily Greek had bored out his eye. There never was a great act which had not, nearer or more remote, a great thought for its ancestor. The old rhymester believed this when he wrote : —

“He that good thinketh good may do,
And God will help him thereunto;
For was never good work wrought
Without beginning of good thought.”

The sneering assertion is too often made without rebuke, that high themes of state are by no means fitted to the closet of the student; that the mighty interests of confederate and yet conflicting sovereignties cannot be subjected to the canons of scholastic rhetoricians or to the crucibles of experimenting chemists; that the wheels of government are too wide-sweeping in their revolutions and too complicated in their adjustments to be controlled or regulated by the feeble strength of white-handed theorizers; in a word, that practical affairs, moral and political as well as mechanical and agricultural, are not suited to men

“Sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought.”

The world is too apt to associate power with the noise and pomp which attend its exercise. Because the cackling of geese once saved the Capitol of Rome, it is thought to follow as a logical *sequitur*, that the senseless gabbling of featherless bipeds is always of more efficiency and value to a people than the counsels of a Cicero or the philosophy of a Seneca. Wisdom is sought in the camp and in the agora; seldom in

the halls of learning. Warriors show the wounds which the happy accident of a Mexican copper bullet may have inflicted, and they are forthwith inducted without the laying on of hands into the sanctuary of our national government.

Far be it from us in this "working-day world" to disparage the achievements of the doers in any field of honorable enterprise. But after all, where but in the brain of the thinker are forged all constitutions and polities and laws? Who but he adjusts the mechanism of society, and knows where to touch the invisible springs of human action? The garret in which the scholar sits among his books, is higher than the saloons of wealth or fashion. The mists which rest upon the lowlands do not rise so as to shut out or refract the clear white light of the noontide. His narrow room is radiant with a brightness not of the sun, and he looks forth as from a mount of vision. His eye scans the wide and teeming Present. The Past, with all its treasures of wisdom and experience, are his. The goodly fellowship of sages, poets, orators, and philosophers inspire him in his prophecies for the Future. The proud exclamation of the great leader of modern science, "We are the ancients," is eminently true of the scholar. For him Virgil told the adventures of Æneas, the fall of Ilium and the rise of Rome; for him Demosthenes declaimed on the sea-shore, and from the sounding Bema

"fulmined over Greece

To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne";

for him Socrates discoursed of life and death and immortality; for him Plato and More created ideal republics; for him Cicero hurled his anathemas at Catiline, and talked as no one had ever talked before, of patriotism, justice, and law; for him Bacon laid deep and broad the foundations of experimental philosophy; for him Hampden and Sidney, Washington and Lafayette, fought the battles of freedom; for him Burke and Chatham, Marshall and Story, expounded the principles of constitutional liberty; for him artists, famous or unknown, touched with magic power the stones of Rome, of Greece, of Egypt, and of half-fabulous Assyria, so that they speak to him an intelligible language from far-off centuries. There has not been a poet, who has not burned and sung for him; not

a philosopher, who has hidden from him his profoundest and most subtle thoughts; not an orator, whose eloquence has not stirred, like the angel of Bethesda, the fountain of his being; not an earnest student, whose midnight lamp has not shone for him; not a champion of human rights, whose valor he has not witnessed on the red field of battle; not a martyr to truth, whose blood does not cry to him from the ground. The brilliant intellects and brave hearts of remote ages have sent their great thoughts and great deeds down to him, as the fountains of the Apennines sent their pure waters, through far-reaching aqueducts, into the city of Rome. All that is valuable in liberty, in science, in philosophy, in religion, in law, the past has poured at his feet. How preposterous, then, to maintain, that the profound scholar, thus situated in the light of other days, rich in the wealth of buried centuries, should be regarded as incapable of good or ill in the exigencies of society, while the great interests which belong to the well-being and existence even of nations are committed to the hands of trading politicians, impudent pretenders to patriotism, eel-fishers in the Copais Palus,* brazen demagogues whose reverberating sciolism is as empty as their heads!

The unobtrusive thinker, then, is not a cipher at the left hand of society. He has a power for good far transcending the conception of those who look upon the student's life as one long holiday. To the service of his country he brings a sterner culture than can be found in a listless wandering amid Sabeian odors,—a higher consecration than a baptism in rose-water can give,—a larger experience than those who live only within the horizon of the passing hour can know,—a clearer prescience than the leaves of the Sibyl or the utterances of the rapt Pythoness can impart. He stands a daysman between the Past and the Future, and can lay his hand upon them both. Without him history would have no lessons for the Present, but would be a “dreamy, aimless procession

* ὅπερ γὰρ οἱ τὰς ἐγγέλεις θηρώμενοι πέπονθας ·
 ὅταν μὲν ἡ λίμνη καταστῇ λαμβάνουσιν οὐδέν ·
 εἰάν δ' ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω τὸν βόρβορον κυκῶσιν
 αἰροῦσιν.

of lost spirits descending into the pit." Without him the ship of state would drift in darkness on a perilous sea, with no charts of hidden rocks and lee-shores, and with no beacons on the headlands. Without him to feed and guard the lamp of thought, the light would grow dim, and the flapping of a conqueror's banner would extinguish it forever. Without him to discover and invent, the hum of industry would be hushed in our work-shops, and the music of machinery would cease to mingle with that of our mountain streams. In estimating the value of men, and determining their relative importance in society, we must look beneath the surface of things, and remember that one great principle, either in science, morals, or political economy, distinctly enunciated and clothed with organic life, outweighs the armies and navies of the world, is more decisive of the destiny of the human race than all the great battles which have ever been fought, from Marathon to Magenta.

The next popular fallacy to which we shall refer relates to the industrial element in our national life. It is *the confounding of wealth with material riches*.

The distinction here is not a subtle one, as might at first glance seem; but it is broad and radical. The word *wealth* belongs to a numerous family. Its nearest relatives are the English words *weal*, *well*, *heal*, *hale*, and the Latin *valeo*. The primary idea in it, therefore, is *soundness*, — soundness of mind and body, a symmetrical wholeness; and *wholeness*, we know, is etymologically, if not theologically, synonymous with *holiness*. *Riches*, on the other hand, is allied to *rex*, *rego*, *regnum*, and to our English substantives *reach*, *region*, and implies, therefore, extent of possessions and power. Wealth, we see then, is a subjective term, relating primarily to the quality of the man; while riches is an objective term, and refers exclusively to the external world, to farms and flocks, ships and merchandise. The man who does not own a rood of land, nor even a single share of fancy stock, may have a wealth of affection, of intellectual culture, of moral sentiment, which all the "barbaric pearl and gold" of the East could not buy. Most men look upon the earth only as a great farm, suitably divided into mowing, tillage, and

pasture-land, with numerous water-privileges and orchards. They see no footprints in the old red sandstone, but they are sharper than Lynceus to detect infinitesimal gold or platinum specks in quartz rock. "Put money in thy purse," was the precept of Iago, and it is obeyed with more relish than the Decalogue in every profession and rank of life.

"Lord Stafford mines for coal and salt,
The Duke of Norfolk deals in malt,
The Douglass in red herrings ;
And noble name and cultured land,
Palace and park and vassal band,
Are powerless to the notes of hand
Of Rothschild or the Barings."

But while too many make the acquisition of money the over-mastering passion of life, we would not be understood as decrying its value. That it is a good thing for the individual and for the state, does not admit of a question. The constituent elements of our civilization — our manufactures, commerce, and agriculture, our educational and religious institutions — require, one and all, a capital, immense beyond the conception of those who flippantly talk of the utilitarianism of the age. If the material riches necessary to a high state of civilization could be more equally diffused, it would undoubtedly be a blessing to rich and poor alike. It is an unhappy fact, that nine tenths of the property of this country is owned by one tenth of the people. But this is the result of our individuality, and our individuality is the result of our civil and social liberty. It is, like sin, the consequence of the freedom of the will. But it is a consolation to those of us who are fellow-citizens in poverty, — who look forward to affluence as the Hebrew, faint with watching in a strange land, looks forward to the coming Messiah, with a hope fringed and shadowed with despair, — to know that riches are not the true wealth, that money is not all of property. Your neighbors across the street live perchance in magnificent houses, and occupy large estates. They point to certain dingy scrolls in the Register's office, and call these buildings and grounds their own. But it is your fault if they are not essentially yours as well as theirs. They may, it is true, range

at will through drawing-room and boudoir, as you may not, and consume the fruits which spring up along the garden paths; but the divine effluence which comes from marble colonnades and "speaking oaks," the incense shed from the thousand swinging censers of blossoming trees, the morning music of singing birds and lowing kine,—these cannot be held by title-deeds, or shut in by high walls and triple-thorned acacia. It is only the grosser products of the dull earth which can be appropriated to individuals;—the ethereal essence of nature, its beauty and its glory, are free as the chainless air. They were meant for all who have the seeing eye, the hearing ear, and the understanding heart. It is quite possible that the rich man may reap a smaller harvest from his broad acres than the gardener who trains his vines and trims his trees. The greatest loser by the destructive fire in New York city, in the summer of 1842, was not the millionaire whose massive structures sunk to ashes in an hour; but it was the poor negro woman who only lost the two trees and the little bed of flowers which glorified her tiny garden, and upon which she had expended the strength saved from incessant toil, and the watchful care which the full heart must lavish upon the sole objects of its yearning affections.

It is a significant question which Mrs. Child asks in one of her letters, "Which would a mother value most, the price of the most elegant pair of Parisian slippers, or a little worn-out shoe, once filled with a precious infant foot now walking with the angels?" There are a thousand things which make up the sum of our real wealth, over which money has no power,—with which it has nothing to do. Who would cut down for the market the tree which sheltered his childhood, or sell the portrait of a friend in heaven? These things, and such as these, have an intrinsic and permanent worth, irrespective of the rise and fall of stocks, independent of the fluctuations of society and the progress of the race. But material riches have no absolute value; they are only relative, and therefore always changing. What is a luxury in one age becomes a want, or even a necessity, in a succeeding age. Our aristocratic ancestors in the fifteenth century sat on wooden benches, drank their beer in wooden bowls, and ate their salt-

fish or joint of beef on pewter plates. Now the Catawba of their descendants sparkles in cut-glass or gold, and the richest meats exhale their fragrance from Sevres China. Chimneys and window-glass were wonderful domestic rarities, and bleached shirts and cotton umbrellas were personal extravagances at periods not very remote from this. An Irish shanty by a railroad-cut is a palace compared with the human lair which a troglodyte of the Upper Nile calls his home.

It was a characteristic remark of Lord Falkland, "I pity unlearned gentlemen on a rainy day." The educated man is never alone. He may not be admitted to the first circles, or to "our set"; but Plato never sends his servant to the door to say "Not at home" to him, and Shakespeare never "cuts" him in the streets. In nature, too, there is no "Fifth Avenue," no favoritism, no exclusiveness, no costly pews along the cathedral aisles of her grand old woods. When Michael took Adam up into the highest hill of Paradise,

"To show him all earth's kingdoms and their glory,"

he not only "purged with euphrasy and rue the visual nerve," but he also

"from the well of Life three drops instilled,
E'en to the inmost seat of mental sight."

It is here where we find the grand distinction between men, — a distinction deeper and broader than that which lies between poverty and riches. Money, at best, is but the complement of the senses. It can, like the angel, introduce us into new fields of vision, spread out before us the colossal grandeur and profuse luxuriance of a tropical clime, or fling open the doors to galleries of painting and sculpture in Rome or Corinth; but, unlike the angel, it cannot give us the intellectual power of appreciating either nature or art, or the delicate taste which can relish and enjoy them.

"We may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life whose fountains are within.
O Lady! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does nature live."

Our own poet-philosopher, whose scholarly pen has rendered classic the fields and river which the first blood of the Revo-

lution made sacred, has brought to this subject, as to many others, the discrimination of a clear-seeing intellect. "The moral sensibility, which makes Edens and Tempes so easily, may not be always found, but the material landscape is never far off. We can find these enchantments without visiting the Como Lake or the Madeira Islands. The stars at night stoop down over the brownest, homeliest common, with all the spiritual magnificence which they shed on the Campagna or on the marble deserts of Egypt. The uprolled clouds and the colors of morning and evening will transfigure maples and alders. The difference between landscape and landscape is small, but there is a great difference in the beholders."

The distinction between wealth and material riches is as clearly marked in the state as in the individual. The immense territory of our own country, washed by oceans three thousand miles apart and stretching wellnigh through a zone; our inland seas and majestic rivers, bearing on their bosom the products of a teeming soil; our interminable coasts, scalloped with bays and "broad-armed ports"; the white wings of our commerce, beating, like the albatross, the air of every clime; our panting engines, running on their iron tracks across the continent or raging in the streets of our cities, like the fiery chariots of Nahum; our mountain streams, weaving and grinding for a naked and hungry world,—these are not to be overlooked or forgotten. But it should be remembered that a state has other and better property than that which serves its material uses. The great thoughts which have illuminated it, the great words which have been spoken in it, the great deeds which have been done in it, the great works of art which have been wrought in it, the heroic self-sacrifice which has sanctified it, — these are a nation's chief and choicest possessions.

Another wide-spread popular fallacy relates to the state, — to the *τὰ πολιτικά* of Aristotle. It is *the confounding of Law with legislative enactments*.

We do not mean to say that these are never accordant, but we do mean to say that they may be, and often are, in direct and open antagonism. In discussing this point we shall of course leave out of view all those regulations of public conduct which have no moral quality, but are merely prudential.

There is no inherent right in catching alewives in Taunton river on Fridays ; no inherent wrong in catching them on Saturdays. Whether a young man shall pay a poll-tax at the age of sixteen or twenty-one, is not a question of morals, but of political economy. There is in the world, especially in despotic governments, not a little solemn quackery about the inviolability of human legislation, the awful and unapproachable majesty of mean and wicked enactments promulgated by mean and wicked men.

Law in its highest and proper sense is either the mode in which God acts, or the property which, in the constitution of things, he has impressed alike upon mind and matter. Unlike human statutes, it is uniform, universal, immutable. This distinction, too little recognized in modern times, did not escape the acutest mind of antiquity. "Law," says Cicero, "in accordance with the opinion of the wisest men, is not a thing thought out by the ingenuity of man, nor is it a decree of the people, but it is an eternal entity, coeval in its origin and harmonizing in its action with the Divine Mind." Few truths of more vital importance in their relations to man have ever been uttered by uninspired lips.

The great mass of the people have yet to learn, that far above the conflicting opinions of men, far above the clashing statutes of deliberative bodies, Law has "its seat in the bosom of God," unchanged and unchangeable, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. We desecrate the name of law, whenever we apply it, as men are wont to do, to the capricious decrees of despots, or to the fiats of a fickle populace. The greatest enormities that have ever darkened and disfigured the history of the world have been perpetrated in strict accordance with the forms and spirit of legislative enactments, or in the common but false and deceptive phrase, "according to law."

Hancock and Adams rebelled against British rule, and trampled under foot stamp-acts and writs of assistance, and, because they succeeded in the struggle which followed, they are held in grateful remembrance by worshipping millions. But had they been defeated, they would have been hanged with their compatriots on the highest tree — "according to law."

Algernon Sidney was suspected of opposition to tyranny and a love for constitutional freedom, and because he failed in his efforts to overturn the one and secure the other, he was convicted of treason before the infamous Jeffries, and beheaded on Tower Hill — “according to law.”

A slave of Pedanius Secundus, Prefect of Rome, had, as Tacitus tells us, bought his liberty, and because the boon for which he had toiled and paid was unjustly withheld, he in his desperation murdered his master. For this act, the guilt of which, whatever it might be, attached to him alone, all his fellow-slaves, four hundred in number, of every age, from helpless infancy to the decrepitude of years, of every shade of complexion, from the fair-haired daughters of German princes to the captive soldiers of Indian kings, were tried for their lives. It mattered not that they were innocent; it mattered not that the people were inclined to mercy; the Senate was inexorable, and they were all executed in cold blood, without pity and without exception, but the butchery was done — “according to law.”

Socrates, the brightest genius in the dark past, whose “low-roofed house” had been made radiant by the light of philosophy, if not of love, was arraigned before the popular tribunal of the Heliæa, by a majority of three voices was condemned to death, and, therefore, drank the hemlock — “according to law.”

It is fitting that we, as constituent elements of a free government, as men who cannot delegate our duties and responsibilities to priest or judge, should discriminate between the true and the false, — between that legislation which is but the re-enactment of the Divine Law, and therefore a “terror to evil-doers,” and that legislation which is but the expression of human prejudice and passion, and sets its heel upon the sanctities of Eternal Justice. The one demands our reverent obedience; the other deserves our indignant maledictions. We need not raise the bloody flag of revolution. That is the prerogative of the down-trodden victims of despotism; in this country it would be an atrocious crime. In a republic we may appeal to the people, with a confidence proportioned to their intelligence, and await the remedy of the ballot-box.

Meanwhile it should be remembered, that when citizens, through loyalty to the government, attempt to obey a statute which is in contravention of all right, they set their nature at strife with itself. They are compelled to annihilate in themselves conscience, instinct, principles, all those qualities and attributes of character on which alone law can rest. It is as if the great goddess Diana, as Coleridge somewhere expresses it, had commanded her priests to dig up the charcoal foundations of the mighty temple of Ephesus in order to furnish fuel for the burnt-offerings on its altar! "That which is not just," said Algernon Sidney, in his epigrammatic way, "is not law, and that which is not law ought not to be obeyed." We cannot, like the Samaritans of old, "fear the Lord" and at the same time "serve graven images."

No wise prince, much less an enlightened deliberative assembly, will ever promulgate an ordinance which a patriotic people can obey only by sacrificing their self-respect, and trampling under foot the immutable principles of right. The "Antigone," foremost among Greek dramas, forcibly exhibits, in the impassioned dialogue between Creon and the heroine of the play, the conflict between the divine law and human decrees. We know of nothing grander than the reply of the condemned though fearless maiden to the tyrant's question, "Hast thou dared to transgress these edicts of mine?"

"I had it not from Jove, nor the just gods
Who rule below; nor could I ever think
A mortal's law of power or strength sufficient
To abrogate the unwritten law divine,
Immutable, eternal, not like these
Of yesterday, but made ere time began."

It is not enough that judges lend to the obnoxious statute the sanction of their approval. However honest and hearty may be our reverence for the judicial dicta of the Woolsack, it is not to be forgotten that William Scroggs and George Jeffries once wore the ermine, and that the intuitions of our own moral sense are sometimes clearer than the vision of Lord Mansfield and Sir Matthew Hale. There have been, and still are, not a few judges whose faces are always turned towards the pyramids,—men in whose estimation dead "au-

thorities" are of more consequence than living justice. An extensive knowledge of books is valuable in the highest degree to him who has the faculty of making the great thoughts of other men enkindle his own intellect to a whiter heat; but not unfrequently the fuel is green and puts out the fire. A case adjudicated by some trembling minion of tyranny, anxious to retain his judicial robes and fearing to displease his master, in the reign, it may be, of Henry VIII., or of some despot still nearer the flood, is not necessarily of more weight and value in determining questions of right, than the unbiassed opinion of an intelligent man who happened to be born in the nineteenth century. Robbers in the East, as we are told, formerly used a certain kind of lantern, the candle for which was made of the fat of a dead malefactor.* The mouldier the fat and the greater the scoundrel from whom it was taken, the surer the light which it furnished and the richer the spoils to which it led. Black-letter judges, slaves to musty "precedents," are the dupes of a similar superstition. Men are slow to learn that the highest "authority" is that of enlightened reason, and that the only irreversible "decisions" are the decisions of common sense. When these are violated, either by the enactment or by the interpretation of a statute, it is not less the duty than the right of every law-abiding citizen to utter his earnest protest. Nothing can be infallible or final which is not just. The people are a higher tribunal than Star-Chambers or Inquisitions. The bench and the throne cannot feel the ground-swell of the heaving millions, without toppling to their fall. We have not forgotten that Chief Justice Hutchinson decided that writs of assistance might be lawfully issued; but the people thought differently, and the world knows the result. We remember that the twelve English judges in the case of Hampden decided unanimously that ship-money might be levied, in accordance with

* It is in allusion to this custom, that Moore, in his *Lalla Rookh*, stigmatizes the judges of his day:—

"Ye wise, ye learn'd, who grope your dull way on
By the dim twinkling gleams of ages gone,
Like superstitious thieves, who think the light
From dead men's marrow guides them best at night."

law, by the crown, without the intervention of Parliament. But the hard-headed Anglo-Saxons, so far from submitting in cheerful acquiescence, "agitated" until these same ermined functionaries reversed their decision in every particular.

The next popular fallacy which claims our notice relates to the social element in our national life,—to our manners. It is *the confounding of reverence with servility*.

The confusion of terms here indicated is perhaps peculiar to this country. It naturally grows out of the freedom of our institutions,—out of the levelling tendencies of our democratic ideas. We do not, in the intensity of our independence, discriminate between reverence and its counterfeit presentment. The dread of appearing servile has led us to be irreverent alike to age, to station, and to things sacred.

We read in relation to the entertainment given by Joseph to his brethren, that "they sat before him, the first-born according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth." Herodotus tells us that the young men of his country and time yielded the road to age, and rose from their seats before the hoary head. It is a noticeable fact, that Demosthenes, the foremost man in the Athenian Senate of Five Hundred, was compelled to apologize, in his first Philippic, for rising to speak before all the older members had delivered their sentiments. The liberty and national existence of Greece were at stake, every heart was glowing, every ear was erect to hear the burning words of the greatest orator in the world, and yet Attic patriotism was subsidiary to Attic politeness. Xenophon, in his *Memorabilia*, says: "The older citizens were in the habit of inquiring of the youths whom they met in the streets of Sparta the place of their destination and the purport of their errand, and reproved those who refused to answer their interrogatories and those who attempted to give an indirect reply." It may be proper in this connection to say, that there was one single exception to this rule. That class of the community which they called *οἱ ἄγαμοι*, and which we call "old bachelors," were not considered by the Greeks as entitled to the ordinary courtesies and amenities of social life, and to them, therefore, boys and girls alike might be as saucy as they pleased, without fear of punishment.

Cicero, in his "De Senectute," declares, that "the respect which is paid to age forms an infallible criterion by which to determine the moral advancement of a people." We are not disposed to question the truth of this assertion. It is a significant fact, that the connection between the demeanor and the character was deemed so intimate and inseparable by the two most deep-seeing and philosophic nations of antiquity, that in the Greek and Latin languages good manners and good morals are the same thing. There is but one word in each for both. The most careless observer of the present day cannot have failed to notice, that the boundary line between them, like some of the lines in geography, is only an imaginary one. We cannot gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles. The soul imparts its own hue and quality to the external life. Or, as Spenser has said in his own quaint way, —

"'T is of the soul the body form doth take,
For soul is form and doth the body make."

Dr. Johnson was a bear in social intercourse, because he was a bear in spirit and feeling. Good manners are the blossom and fragrance of good morals.

The fear which many parents feel, lest their children may not be sufficiently independent in character, coupled with the anxiety of babes and sucklings to grow up and be brought out, has created a feud between nature and fashion, and introduced into society between childhood and mature life a new order of beings, a sort of third estate. We have now in many communities no boys and girls, but a nondescript class of bipeds, waiting to be classified and named. It is certain that our great naturalist, should he undertake the task, will not find in all of them the modest reserve, the respectful demeanor, and the reverent spirit, which were once the characteristics and the glory of the young.

The spirit which animates men is naturally reproduced in boys, and re-enacted in the nursery and at the public schools. In the increasing activity of our people, in the intensity of our haste to be rich, we cannot wait to be respectful. Parents once brought up their children ; children now bring down their parents. Formerly, the traveller in passing the school play-

ground was saluted by deferential bows and courtesies from its party-colored columns of light infantry ; now, the hat adheres to the head as firmly as the scalp, the “ pregnant hinges of the knee ” have forgotten how to crook except where “ thrift may follow fawning,” and the traveller is happy if he can dodge between the snow-balls which fly around him like bomb-shells from a Malakoff. There is no station high enough, no place of power dazzling enough, to inspire Young America with awe, or to call forth any show of reverence.

We have read of an honest Hibernian who plunged into the water, when George IV. was landing at Kingstown, to shake hands with his Majesty, and who was ever afterward so proud of the circumstance, that no earthly inducement could prevail upon him to wash the hand his Majesty had pressed. It is difficult for us to understand and appreciate the spirit of loyalty which animates the subjects of European monarchies. We do not associate the government with any substantive reality. It is an idea, not a person ; a majority of votes, not a crowned head ; the result of a popular election, not one of God’s anointed. The humblest man among us is a Warwick, and can make and unmake kings as easily as the Duke of Northumberland. We are living in the enjoyment of the largest liberty. We look up with reverence to no titled nobility. We despise the obsequious fawning of little men. We practise no genuflections before lazy dignitaries. We train our backs to bend and our eyes to droop in presence of no earthly potentate. It is not true of us, as Juvenal expresses it,* that “ death alone divulges how little are the bodies of men.” We measure with unquailing, curious look the tallest and the proudest, long before we dig their graves. The terms of deferential address, which are always demanded from the lower classes in a country whose government recognizes a distinction of rank among its subjects, are all barbaric jargon to us, and he who should use them here would be regarded as a grotesque caricature of manhood. In the thoroughness of our contempt for the servile homage paid to blood and birth and place, we have gone so far in the other direction as to emancipate ourselves from

* “ Mors sola fatetur
Quantula sint hominum corpuscula.”

the restraints of good breeding, and to maintain our independence of the beautiful amenities of life.

But perhaps the most unsatisfactory aspect in which our want of reverence can be viewed, is in its relations to things sacred. There is in our temples no veil through which the high-priest alone may enter. The foot-fall of the curious inquirer may be heard in the innermost *penetralia*. We do not often take off our shoes because the ground whereon we stand is holy. The Urim and Thummim are only bright buttons on a flashy vest, and the halo around the priestly head is moonshine to us, and nothing more. We do not see anything wrong in laying hands on the ark, and we wonder that the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah at Nachon's threshing-floor. The Mahometans will not tread on the smallest piece of paper in their way; "for," say they, "the name of God may be written upon it." We are troubled with no such scruples. The sacred pages which contain the glowing words of Isaiah and David would be deemed quite as appropriate to light our cigars as to kindle our devotions. The old Hebrew had such a veneration for the name of Jehovah, that he would not pronounce it, even in holiest forms of speech, but used instead of it Adonai or Elohim. There are among us not a few who feel that a simple assertion or plain statement of obvious facts will pass for nothing, unless they swear to its truth by all the names of the Deity, and blister their lips with every variety of hot and sulphurous oath. If we observe such persons closely, we shall generally find that the fierceness of their profanity is in inverse ratio to the affluence of their ideas. We know not but that this may be regarded as a general formula. Byron seems to recognize it when he says of Jack Buntin,

"He knew not what to say, and so he swore."

At any rate, we venture to affirm that the profanest men within the circle of your knowledge are afflicted with a chronic weakness of intellect, and that their half-dozen thoughts rattle in vacant heads like the brazen pebbles we read of. The utterance of an oath, though it may prevent a vacuum in sound, is no indication of sense. It requires no genius to swear,—to "swear terribly like our army in Flanders."

The reckless taking of sacred names in vain is as little characteristic of true independence of thought, as it is of high moral culture. In this beautiful and breathing world, filled as it is with the presence of the Deity and fragrant with incense from its thousand altars of praise, it would be no servility should we catch the spirit of reverent worshippers, and illustrate in ourselves the sentiment that the Christian is the highest style of man.

The last popular fallacy to which we shall allude relates to the moral element in our national culture. It is *the confounding of a religious life with a theological creed*.

The Protestant traveller, who for the first time visits Milan and joins the thousands who, at the vesper hour, throng the avenues and courts of its magnificent cathedral, may amid the gathering gloom of twilight bow with the Catholic devotee at the shrine of the Holy Mother, and yet not assent to the Biblical interpretations of Papal Œcumenic Councils, nor forsake for a moment the faith of his fathers. As he gazes upward upon the immense dome, and around upon colossal statues and long-drawn aisles, the one sentiment of stupendous grandeur, of vastness that dilates rather than humbles the beholder, overpowers alike his prejudice and his pride, and his full soul must flow forth in devotion. The massive columns, the gorgeous paintings, the music chanted by unseen choirs, the tapers faintly burning, dark-eyed maidens kneeling at ancient altars, — all appeal to him with an eloquence which cannot be resisted. They do not ask him to believe in the infallibility of the Pope, nor in the intercessory power of the Virgin Mary, but they ask him to lift his heart in adoration.

A man may be a good man with a very poor creed, or even with no well-defined creed at all. "In unnumbered cases," as Professor Park well says, "the real faith of Christians has been purer than their written statements of it. Men, women, and children have often decided when doctors disagreed, and doctors themselves have often felt aright when they reasoned amiss." It would be difficult, not to say impossible, to frame any written document, however short and simple, which should receive from its readers the same mental interpretation. Words take their meaning, not from their component letters, but from our own natures and associations.

As no two persons ever saw the same rainbow, so no two persons, Christians though they may have been, ever worshipped the same conception of the Deity. We are differently constituted. Our physical temperaments, our intellectual habits, our moral susceptibilities, our hereditary proclivities, separate us. Each has an ideal of the Supreme Good, peculiar to himself. The strong, severe man, who regards human weakness with contempt and sin with indignation, naturally endows the object of his worship with the qualities of his own mind, only in their highest degree. The Infinite One is to him, therefore, an impersonation of inflexible Justice, and his reverence for him is enhanced by the assurance, that he "will by no means clear the guilty." On the other hand, the man of gentle character, who would not "needlessly set foot upon a worm," does not appreciate the sterner attributes of the Godhead, but looks up only to a loving Father whose "tender mercies are over all his works." John Foster in his boyhood "abhorred spiders for killing flies, and abominated butchers." We are not surprised, that, in his manhood, this same John Foster, in all the ripeness of a beautiful Christian character, with his great heart still more tremulously tender than a woman's or a child's, could not accept the doctrine of eternal punishment. On the contrary, Calvin, equally honest, equally earnest, equally profound, could contemplate with composure the burning lake as the necessary and chosen abode of the incorrigibly depraved. He, like Dante, believed that in the future world, as in the present, there must be mingled with an infinite pity an infinite rigor of law. He saw, that here sunny skies are darkened with lowering clouds, from whose depths "leaps the live thunder"; that the spiced and favoring wind, wafting the white sail over the tranquil sea, is changed into the fearful tornado, whose wild wail mingles with the "bubbling cry of some strong swimmer in his agony"; that flowery lawns and June blossoms are charred and wasted by the burning lava of volcanic wrath; that faces, mantled with the smiles of birthday and of bridal, are stained with tears and overshadowed with hopeless pain; that Olivet had not only rung with the songs of vintage and the glad voices of children, but had also in the gray of the morning echoed to

the tread of a brutal soldiery and witnessed the crucifixion. His quick eye had marked the misery which had been permitted in this world, and he had no doubt that a similar economy would prevail in the next. John Calvin and John Foster were both Christians, nominally of the same school; but, so far as the Divine character and government are concerned, they could hardly have subscribed to the same creed.

We do not mean to intimate that it is of no consequence what we believe, but simply that a difference of opinion on subjects beyond the range of knowledge may not only be honest, but even a constitutional necessity. Charles V. was right when he inferred that, if he could not make two clocks keep time together, it were folly in him to attempt to constrain his subjects — thirty millions of thinking men — to a cordial adoption of the same prescribed formula of faith.

So intimate is the relation between soul and body, that our theology almost always tastes of the cask from which it is drawn. Disease, especially if it disturb the normal action of the brain, is likely to modify essentially our creed. To say that Coleridge varied from the most liberal latitudinarianism to the strictest adherence to the "Thirty-nine Articles," somewhat according to the quality and quantity of the opium which he consumed, would not be an extravagant assertion.

But not only is the conception of the Supreme Being different in different persons; the future blessedness to which we aspire varies in character according to our views of the highest good. The poor washerwoman in *Hyperion*, weary and toil-worn, longed to die and go to heaven, that she might sit in a clean white apron and sing psalms all day long. Plato, when asked what would be the employment of heaven, immediately answered, "The study of geometry." To the one, heaven was a place of quiet rest; to the other, a field for thought and for unending progress.

Not only can no two persons, though of equally high religious character, adopt precisely the same creed; it is obvious, also, that no one person can be expected to entertain through a life of ordinary length the same views on any moral subject, especially on one so eminently speculative as that which concerns his spiritual being, its essence and its relations. It is

the order of nature to grow. "I could never," says Sir Thomas Browne, "divide myself from any man upon the difference of an opinion, or be angry with his judgment for not agreeing in that from which within a few days I might dissent myself." The thinking man outgrows his beliefs as he does his clothes. The swaddling-bands of infancy cannot encompass the stalwart loins of manhood.

"Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea."

We know that there are numerous exceptions to this law of growth. There is a large class in society whom Sydney Smith calls the "sheep-walkers," — men who never deviate from the beaten track, who think as their fathers have thought since the flood, who recoil from a new idea as they would from guilt. These persons never disturb society and are never disturbed by it. Only those who have the intellectual vigor necessary to independent thought and fearless expression "turn the world upside down," and, like Paul and Silas, "trouble the people and the rulers of the city." It is among these alone, whose loyalty to truth and duty is stronger than their devotion to sect, that the dungeon, the rack, and the stake have, in all ages, found their victims. The humanizing influence of popular education and a more liberal intellectual culture have softened the asperities of religious persecution; yet even now any departure from the established belief may subject the venturesome wanderer to social discomfort and disabilities. Not a few good men have so identified religion with their own creed, that they look upon every dubious question, every uncanonical conviction, as an alarming approach to unpardonable heresy. The first buddings of thought they regard as incipient excrescences on the body of Christian faith, and woe betide the luckless wight whose spiritual growth should be found to exceed the knot on their measuring-line!

“Here,” said a student to Casaubon, as they entered the old hall of the Sorbonne, “is a building in which men have disputed for more than four hundred years.” “And,” asked Casaubon, “*what has been settled?*” There is a mournful significance in the question of the old Genevan Professor. Four things, however, amid the chaos of conflicting opinions, we think are in a fair way to be settled. First, men fight most readily and with the most bitterness about those doctrines whose influence upon the life is the least. Secondly, persecution for opinion’s sake is not only a crime, but a folly. When the Aurora Borealis can be put out by a fire-engine, then, and not till then, can a religious principle be extinguished by blood. Thirdly, the right claimed by Protestants of interpreting the Sacred Scriptures each one for himself, involving, as it does, not only the possibility, but the necessity of an honest difference of opinion, demands of us, as reasonable men, that we be intolerant of nothing so much as of intolerance. Fourthly, the religion of the heart is higher and better than the scientific creeds of the head, and he is not the best Christian who is the best reciter of formulas, but he whose life is most like that of our Great Exemplar. In aspiring to reach the lofty height of his virtue we shall resemble pilgrims climbing up different sides of the same mountain, who draw nearer at every step, not only to the sun-lit summit, but also to one another. Fallen men are to be saved now as eighteen hundred years ago, and here as in Palestine, not so much by the sharp subtilty of their logic as by the earnest beneficence of their lives.